MacEWEN, Lieutenant Ewan November, 1918 (045)

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Ross & Holmested,

BARRISTERS, SOLICITORS, NOTARIES ETC.

James Leith Ross, Arthur W Holmested.

CABLE ADDRESS: "ROSSHOLME, TORONTO."

TELEPHONES MAIN 7529. PRIVATE EXCHANGE 7530.

National Trust Chambers 20 King St. East

Toronto, Canada,

6th November, 1918.

Sir Robert Falconer, K.C.M.G.,
President University of Toronto,
Toronto.

My dear Sir Robert:-

I would like to draw your attention to a fairly numerous class of University students now in khaki, namely, those who because of wounds or other causes are not now at the front in France and who are, judging from the war news, not likely to be required for further service. There are probably hundreds of these young men now in hospitals or on leave who might just as well be attending classes in some English university or for that matter in the University of Toronto.

I would like to draw your attention to one particular case, that of Lieut. MacEwen, who passed his third year examination in engineering at McGill in May 1916 and almost immediately thereafter enlisted as a gunner in one of the batteries recruited at that University. As a gunner he received the Military Medal, was recommended for promotion from the ranks and was given a commission as a Lieutenant in the British Army. He served with the Imperial forces.

His father, John MacEwen who was an old friend of mine, died within the last ten days after a long illness. Lieut. MacEwen was given three months' leave of absence to visit his father but arrived in Toronto yesterday too late.

I have not yet met the young man personally but a friend of the family has just been in my office and tells me that it is the young man's desire, inasmuch as it seems unlikely that he will be required for active service, that he should immediately take up again his studies so that he can take his examination in the spring. He is at present disposed to study at Toronto University instead of continuing at McGill. His father, until last July, lived in Montreal but when he became critically ill returned to Toronto, his old home and where most of his friends live. His mother is a Toronto lady and she desires to remain here.

I think that some representation should be made to the Government regarding cases of this class so that they might obtain leave to prosecute their studies and that the action taken, if any, should be prompt that these boys may not lose another year.

Enclosed is copy of letter which I wrote to the Honourable Mr. Rowell with reference to my own son who is in much the same position. My son, from all I know of it, would not be fit for service in France again until the spring and I have no idea

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Sir Robert Falconer, K.C.M.G., -2-

that at that time the war will be going on. In any case it seems to me a good thing if leave could be granted in all similar cases so that any boy who so desired might take up his studies until his services should be required.

It seems to me that if pressure is brought to bear on the Government the winter of 1918-1919 may not be wasted by these boys as it is certain to be if there is no decision arrived at now as to the course to be pursued.

I may say that I wrote Mr. Rowell as I have no personal acquaintance with the Minister of Militia. A letter from you to the latter would no doubt have very great effect but you will know better than I do in what manner representation should be made to the Government if you approve of the view outlined above. From the point of view of the University it would be surely of most decided advantage to add immediately to the number of male students. The smallness of their number is made so marked by the great number of young women. I was shocked when I visited the buildings the other day.

I remain, Sir Robert,

Very sincerely yours,

James Ross.

(enc.)
R/R

4th November, 1918.

PERSONAL

The Honourable N.W.Rowell,
President of the Council,
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Mr. Rowell:-

I have a son #338,028 Gunner Douglas Leith Ross, 11th Battery, C.F.A. wounded 2nd September, 1918, now in Hartley College Hospital, Manchester, and so far recovered from his injuries that he would be quite fit to take up again his studies either at Toronto University where he matriculated June 1916 or, if he preferred, in England. The war news this morning suggests that he will probably not be required for further military service and if so I would very much like that he should not be further delayed in prosecuting his studies. He intends to study law and as a preliminary, to take a University course.

He enlisted in October 1916 a few days after he became eighteen years of age in the 67th (Toronto University) Battery. He went overseas in the beginning of 1917 and to the front the summer following, serving with the 11th Battery, C.F.A. He was at Passchendaele and has been through everything in which the Canadians have since been engaged up to the breaking of the switch line on the 2nd September. Had he waited until called under The Military Service Act he would not have left Canada but would now be in his third year at Toronto University. His own estimate given some weeks ago was that he would not be back in France until January and the news from Europe indicates that it is not likely that he will ever be required for further service. If such is the case I think that young fellows of his class should get the first consideration, that is, that they should be allowed to return first to take up their studies and make up for lost time.

I took up the question of his University course with Sir Robert Falconer and the Registrar, Mr. Brebner, a week or two ago and they said that as he had simply matriculated but had not actually been in attendance at lectures no allowance under the present rules could be made and that it would be necessary for him to complete the full four years of study. If he were to return now he would be able to take up his first year immediately.

I do not believe that in bringing this matter before you I am asking any favour as it is in the national interest that so soon as these boys cease to be required they should be allowed to continue their studies.

4th November, 1918.

The Honourable N.W.Rowell, -2-

In the beginning of October when it seemed unlikely that he would go back to France before spring, I wrote to a cousin in England asking if he could arrange, subject to permission being given by the Military authorities, that my son should have the privilege of studying at Oxford as an occasional student and so spend his time usefully. There is not yet time for reply but I have no doubt that this can be arranged. My son might prefer on conferring with my cousin to spend the winter at Oxford where, I understand, owing to the sacrcity of students, the facilities are particularly good and it might be seen meanwhile whether he would be required for further duty.

If anything is to be done I would like that it be done immediately as if he is to enter upon his college course and take an examination in the spring he will be unable to do so unless he starts within the next few weeks.

I think under the circumstances my son as well as all in a similar class are entitled to leave of absence without pay to continue their studies and their discharge immediately on peace being declared.

Faithfully yours,

P.S. In the last letter I received from my son he said that he was likely to be moved from Hartley College Hospital. His mail address is care of the cousin above referred to, as follows,

#338,028
Gunner Douglas Leith Ross,
C/O F.W.Leith-Ross, Esq.,
The Treasury,
Downing Street,
London, England.

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Nov. 10 1918.

Sir Robert Falconer K.C.M.G.
President
University of Toronto

Dear Sir:-

Before the war I was a student in civil engineering at McGill University. I fully completed three years of that course at the time of my enlistment. Circumstances have since altered so that it will be very difficult for me to return to Montreal to complete my course. Under these conditions I would be greatly obliged if you could give me some idea of the standing I would be granted at the University of Toronto if I find I am able to continue my studies here.

I remain
Yours respectfully
Ewen MacEwen 2/Lt R.G.A.

61 Isabella St.
Toronto.

November 15th, 1918

Lieutenant Ewen MacEwen,

61 Isabella Street,

Toronto.

Dear Mr. MacEwen:

Will you please go to see Mr. Laing of the Faculty of Applied Science immediately and he will take up your case? I have no doubt that arrangements will be made so that you may complete your work in Civil Engineering here. I spoke to Mr. Laing about you yesterday.

Yours sincerely,

President.